

## Andrew Jackson to Jenkin Whiteside, February 10, 1810, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### TO JENKINS WHITESIDE.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United States senator, 1809–1811.

Hermitage, February 10, 1810

*Dear Sir* , I have Just recd. your friendly and polite letter of the 26th. last month to which I hasten to reply. When I was solicited by those respectable citizens and particular friends of mine who are about to remove to the county of Madison to accept of the appointment of Judge in that county in case such arrangement was made, I had it not in contemplation of becoming a citizen of that county. From my persuits for several years past, from many unpleasant occurrences that took place during that time it has given to my mind such a turn of thought, that I have laboured to get clear off. I have found this impossible, and unless some new persuit to employ my mind and thoughts, I find it impossible to divest myself of those habits of gloomy and pevish reflections that the wanton and flagitious conduct, and unmeritted refle[c]tions of base calumny, heaped upon me has given rise to. in order to try the experiment how far new scenes might relieve me from this unpleasant tone of thought, I did conclude to accept that appointment in case it was offerred me, and I was careless about the compensation attached to the appointment.

Since the arival of last mail which brought your letter two of my friends, fearfull from the provisions of the law, that it would prevent me from accepting in case it was offerred to me has visited me whose arguments and wishes has brought me to the following conclusion. That in case the office should be offerred to me I will accept thereof if the

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compensation is such that will meet necessary annual expences. it is stated to me that the salary of the Judge of Washington county is \$1000, 1200, or 1500. Either of these sums is fully adequate to my expence lower than either would not, and for a less than the lowest I would not accept, and notwithstanding I am not needy, and I have a wish to gratify my friends, still it is a duty I owe myself and family, not to impair my little co[m]petency which I possess from my own industry to the gratification of my friends or the service of my country when that service can be performed as well by others. You may think it curious that I have been so unatentive to the civil text of late years, as not to know the compensation of the differrent officers of government, but it is really the fact, and I do not know the salary that Judge Tollman receives. I therefore state to you if the salary is \$1000 or upwards under the condition of the law I will accept and if permanent residence is not required, for any salary for the before ment[i]oned reasons I would accept.

far from the Temporising disposition displayed by congress, I am well aware that no act of insult, degradation or contumely offered to our goverment will arouse them from their present lethergy and temporiseing conduct, untill my name sake<sup>2</sup> sets fire to some of our seaport Towns and puts his foot aboard a British man of war. Then perhaps, the Spirit of 76. may again arise. I was in hopes, that the energy of the executive would have been followed up by congress, but the arguments made use of and the opposition to the resolution from the Senate has convinced me that the present congress will not act with energy, that some of our old republican friends, have either lost their usual good judgt. or their Political principle. from all which I conclude that as a military man I shall have no amusement or business, and indolence and inaction would shortly

<sup>2</sup> Francis James Jackson, envoy of Great Britain.

destroy me. for these reasons and under the provisions of this letter I authorise you to say that if appointed I will accept. . . .<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Donelson Caffery, a nephew of Mrs. Jackson's, writing to Jackson from Natchez, Dec. 5, 1810, had this to say about Jackson's desire to move to Mississippi: "Cousin Sandy

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informs me you are determin'd to move to this Country, I will not pretend to advise you, but persist in the opinion I have before express'd, that were I, in your situation would not move. You have nearly got through all your embarrassments, you have a delightful farm, from the produce of which you will at least be able to live comfortably; by the respectable and well inform'd part of the Country you are highly esteem'd, you are able to select a good society from yr. neighborhood. You have been able there to read the Characters of men In their actions; here another Volume will be presented to our view in which human baseness will take up a considerable part." But Gen. Wade Hampton's letter to Jackson, Dec. 9, 1810, shows that Jackson did not give up his idea of selling his estate. See *post*.